NOTE III.

SOME REMARKS CONCERNING THE ORANG-OETAN

BY

Dr. F. A. JENTINK.

May 1895.

About at the same time when we received Büttikofer's red-haired specimens of Orang-oetan[1] from Borneo, I procured two dark-colored specimens, a female and a young, with their skeletons, collected near Sintang (Central Borneo).

As the dark-colored specimens have been looked upon by some naturalists as belonging to a different species, *Simia morio*, it is evident that I now reviewed our rather large material of the Bornean Orang-oetan: the Sumatran-specimens, being very badly represented in the collections, as they seem to be rare to be had in Sumatra, we may leave out of consideration at present.

The following are the supposed chief differences pointed out by the writers on the subject: a red color in *Simia satyrus*, a dark one in *Simia morio;* a nail on the thumb of the hind feet in the first, no nail on that thumb in the latter; besides differences in the bony parts especially of the skull.

Now it is a fact that the study of a large series clearly shows that none of the named characteristics may be called constant; there is an endless variation in tinge, from light red to dark brown-red, independent from age or sex or habitat; the nail on the thumb of the hind feet is present or wanting as well in red as in dark colored individuals; and the peculiarities of the skull are the most puzzling of all, no two skulls of the same age are alike, there is an endless variation of development in prognatism, in form, state of excavation and extension of the bony palate, in length of nasalia, in shape, size and position of the orbits, in development of the crista, which often is very prominent in small skulls, much less prominent or not present in large skulls, in size and shape of the lower jaw especially of its posterior half. And with all other characteristics it is always the same thing, f. i. with the length of the fur a. s. o., everywhere a very surprising inconstancy. In this point it is like in the human beings, no two persons are exactly alike. The reason for the Bornean Orang-oetan is perhaps this: that there are in Borneo no large carnivorous animals, no ennemies to throw obstacles in the way of their existence, in one word there is no struggle for life, by which they would be forced to a development in a certain direction; they live more or less all under the same conditions, the equator crossing the middle of the island.

---

[1] *Orang-oetang*, as some authors call the animal, is wrong as this means literally translated „*a debtor*": *Orang* = *man*, *person*, and *Oetang* or *Hoetang* = *debt*. It should always be written *Orang-oetan*, as *Oetan* means *forest*, *wood*, *wilderness*. So there is a *Babi-oetan*, *Kambing-oetan*, a. s. o.